



SSCR No.44 of 2023

IN THE HIGH COURT OF KERALA AT ERNAKULAM

PRESENT

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE ANIL K.NARENDRAN

&

THE HONOURABLE MR. JUSTICE G.GIRISH

THURSDAY, THE 7TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2023 / 16TH

AGRAHAYANA, 1945

SSCR NO.44 OF 2023

IN THE MATTER OF TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD - SABARIMALA
SPECIAL COMMISSIONER REPORT - SM NO.44/2023 - REGARDING
THE EXPEDITIOUS CONSTRUCTION OF NADAPANDAL AT PAMBA
MANAPPURAM DUE TO HEAVY RUSH OF PILGRIMS TO HAVE DARSHAN
AT SABARIMALA SANNIDHANAM - SUO MOTU PROCEEDINGS
INITIATED - REG.

PETITIONER:

SUO MOTU

RESPONDENTS:

- 1 STATE OF KERALA,
REPRESENTED BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO
GOVERNMENT, REVENUE (DEVASWOM) DEPARTMENT,
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-
695001
- 2 TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD,
REPRESENTED BY ITS SECRETARY, NANTHANCODE,
KAWDIAR POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM 695 003
- 3 DEVASWOM COMMISSIONER,
TRAVANCORE DEVSWOM BOARD, DEVASWOM BUILDINGS,
NANTHANCODE, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM -695005
- 4 EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
SABARIMALA, SABARIMALA P.O.,



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PATHANAMTHITTA-689 662

**5 CHIEF ENGINEER,
MARAMATH WING, TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD,
NANTHANCODE, KOWDIAR POST, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
695003**

OTHER PRESENT:

SRI S.RAJMOHAN - SR. GOVERNMENT PLEADER

**SRI G.BIJU -STANDING COUNSEL- TRAVANCORE
DEVASWOM BOARD**

**SRI N.RAGHURAJ- AMICUS CURIAE FOR SPL
COMMISSIONER**

**THIS SABARIMALA SPECIAL COMMISSIONER REPORT HAVING
COME UP FOR ADMISSION ON 07.12.2023, THE COURT ON THE SAME
DAY DELIVERED THE FOLLOWING:**

**ORDER****Anil K. Narendran, J.**

The Special Commissioner, Sabarimala has filed this report seeking orders regarding expeditious construction of Nadapandal at Pamba Manappuram, due to heavy rush of pilgrims at Sabarimala during the Mandala-Makaravilakku festival season 1199 ME.

2. In the report, the Special Commissioner has stated that the Superintendent of Police, Pathanamthitta has forwarded Annexure 1 letter dated 05.12.2023, reporting that the number of pilgrims is increasing and getting out of control during the festival season. In order to control the rush of devotees, the Virtual-Q booking has been limited to 90,000 per day. But the current situation is that the number of pilgrims reaches more than 1,10,000 including spot booking on most of the days. Due to heavy rush, the blocking of pilgrims at Pamba is necessitated in the Nadapandal at Pamba Manappuram, which is currently under construction. Without the Nadapandhal, it is very difficult to control the flow of pilgrims from Pamba Manappuram to Ganapathikovil. Due to long period of waiting, pilgrims including children and senior citizen



stranding in the queue become weak and exhausted and dehydrated. As there is likelihood of increase in the flow of pilgrims in the coming days, the construction of the Nadapandal should be completed.

3. On 06.12.2023, when SSCR Nos.29 and 42 of 2023 came up for consideration, this Court has passed an order on crowd management at Sabarimala. Paragraph 10 of that order reads thus;

“10. Having considered the submissions made at the Bar, we deem it appropriate to direct the 2nd respondent Chief Police Co-ordinator, Sannidhanam, who is in the rank of Additional Director General of Police, to constantly monitor crowd management at Sannidhanam, Pamba and Nilakkal and also in the trekking path from Pamba to Sannidhanam. Depending upon the expected footfall on each day and considering the position of the tail-end of the queue from Sannidhanam, appropriate regulatory measures for crowd management shall be implemented by the 2nd respondent Chief Police Co-ordinator by ‘hold and release’ mechanism. When the movement of pilgrims from Pamba to Sannidhanam, through the trekking path, is regulated by ‘hold and release’ mechanism, 16 pilgrims sheds from Pamba to Sabaripet, 2 pilot queue complexes from Sabaripet to Marakkootam and 6 queue complexes from Marakkootam to Saramkuthi shall be put to use for accommodating the pilgrims. There are



shops near the queue complexes and light refreshment stalls near the pilgrim sheds. The queue complexes have toilet facilities and there are bio-toilets near some of the pilgrim sheds and also on the side of the trekking path. To the extent possible, the pilgrims shall be accommodated near the queue complexes, pilgrim sheds or places where bio-toilets are provided in the trekking path. Sufficient number of police personnel shall be deployed in those locations in order to avoid infiltration and queue jumping. The pilgrims stranded in the queue shall be provided with 'chukku vellam' and biscuits by deploying sufficient number of volunteers. The Board shall take necessary steps to ensure that the toilets in the queue complexes and the bio-toilets near the pilgrim sheds and also on the side of trekking path are cleaned regularly by the employees engaged for that purpose."

4. Today, when this matter is taken up for consideration, the learned Standing Counsel for Travancore Devaswom Board, on instructions, would submit that the newly constructed Nadapandals, three in number, in Pamba Manappuram, having a total area of 270 square meters, have already been inspected by the police officials, yesterday. The entire work relating to the Nadapandals will be completed today. It is expected that all the three Nadapandals will be opened to pilgrims, today evening. Each Nadapandal can accommodate



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approximately 640 pilgrims.

In such circumstances, this SSCR is disposed of by directing the Travancore Devaswom Board to ensure that the newly constructed Nadapandals at Pamba Manappuram are opened to the pilgrims today itself.

Sd/-

ANIL K. NARENDRAN, JUDGE

Sd/-

G. GIRISH, JUDGE

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